

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK RECOGNIZES FIRST RESPONDERS' COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING QUALITY PREHOSPITAL CARE**

***May 15 - 21 is National EMS Week***

(RICHMOND, Va.) – When you or your loved one suffers from a medical emergency, it is Virginia's Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel who are relied upon to respond quickly to the call for help and provide quality prehospital care. Last year, EMS providers responded to just over 1.4 million calls for help in Virginia, approximately 3,879 incidents per day.

As proclaimed by Governor Terry McAuliffe, May 15 – 21, 2016, is EMS Week in Virginia. This special week honors EMS responders' commitment to providing lifesaving services. EMS for Children Day, May 18, focuses on the pediatric patient and the specialized care necessary for them.

"I am thankful for the dedicated EMS personnel throughout Virginia who have made it their personal mission to serve their neighbors," said State Health Commissioner Marissa J. Levine, MD, MPH, FAAFP.

"Without those willing to serve, there would be no EMS system. You are great examples of what it takes for us to become the healthiest and safest state in the nation, and the Virginia Plan for Well-Being."

"When a citizen calls 911, it is our devoted volunteers and career providers who respond to that request and administer lifesaving patient care. This year's EMS Week theme is 'EMS Strong: Called to Care' and it's a great representation of our steadfast providers' commitment to quality prehospital patient care," said Gary Brown, director of the Virginia Department of Health's Office of EMS. "Virginia has nearly 35,000 providers, and I am proud of their accomplishments and thankful for their unyielding perseverance to serve and protect the health of all Virginians."

Many Virginia EMS agencies will host a variety of community activities, including first aid classes, health and safety fairs, open houses, fundraisers and more. These family-friendly events encourage citizens to meet and greet the first responders in their neighborhoods.

To honor Virginia's fallen fire and EMS personnel, Fire and EMS Memorial Week will take place June 5 – 11, 2016. This event, in conjunction with the Annual Virginia Fallen Firefighters and EMS Memorial Service, honors fire and EMS responders who died in the line of duty and recognizes those who risk their lives daily to serve and protect Virginians. The Annual Fallen Firefighters and EMS Memorial Service will be held June 4 at noon at the Richmond International Raceway.

To learn more about the Virginia Department of Health's Office of EMS, visit [www.vdh.virginia.gov/oems](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/oems).

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